The fifth prime directive

Written by dreamkatcha. Any related videos, as always, can be found on my YouTube channel.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic resources generously provided by immensely talented emulator authors, and communities such as Hall of Light, Lemon Amiga, Lemon 64, World of Spectrum, Moby Games, World of Longplays and Recorded Amiga Games. Thank you for your tireless dedication to preserving the history of gaming.

Miraculously the human race has reached the year 2067. We haven't *utterly* destroyed the planet yet, but we're getting there steadily. Currently swamped with pollution, the globe's collective ruling elite have taken the joint decision to rescue solely the VIPs, laying on 'City Ships' to keep them afloat until our elected "representatives can figure out what the hell is going on". Let's hope *Trump* isn't on the panel or we'll all sink without a trace!

Master plan-wise, the crux was to unleash an army of robot 'Wolverines' to quell the rebel human uprising while the clean-up operation commenced. What this new dynasty failed to factor in was the almost total annihilation of the Wolverines courtesy of a fearsome breed of hybrid mutants known as Scavengers. In the only preview of the game published it was stated that the latter were to take the form of "black stick-like robots"... clearly *they* didn't make the final cut then.

Playing as the last Wolverine standing, the future of man, woman, and botkind rests on our stainless steel shoulder pads. Presenting as a one-droid-army crossed between Narnia's Mr Tumnus and a frog, I'm not counting any chickens before they hatch.

We must stomp or swoop through a trinity of levels under various guises - approached from multiple perspectives - in order to reach the sweltering alien HQ known as the Furnace. Once there the boss is to be vanquished, derailing his stranglehold on the flow of clean air; the key to the planet's rejuvenation and salvation.

Robozone was created by Arc Developments and published by Image Works in 1991. Its initial level clearly taking inspiration from the Killing Game Show, it is, in fact, a *medley* of sub-games that draws from an assortment of genre-definers, not least R-Type.
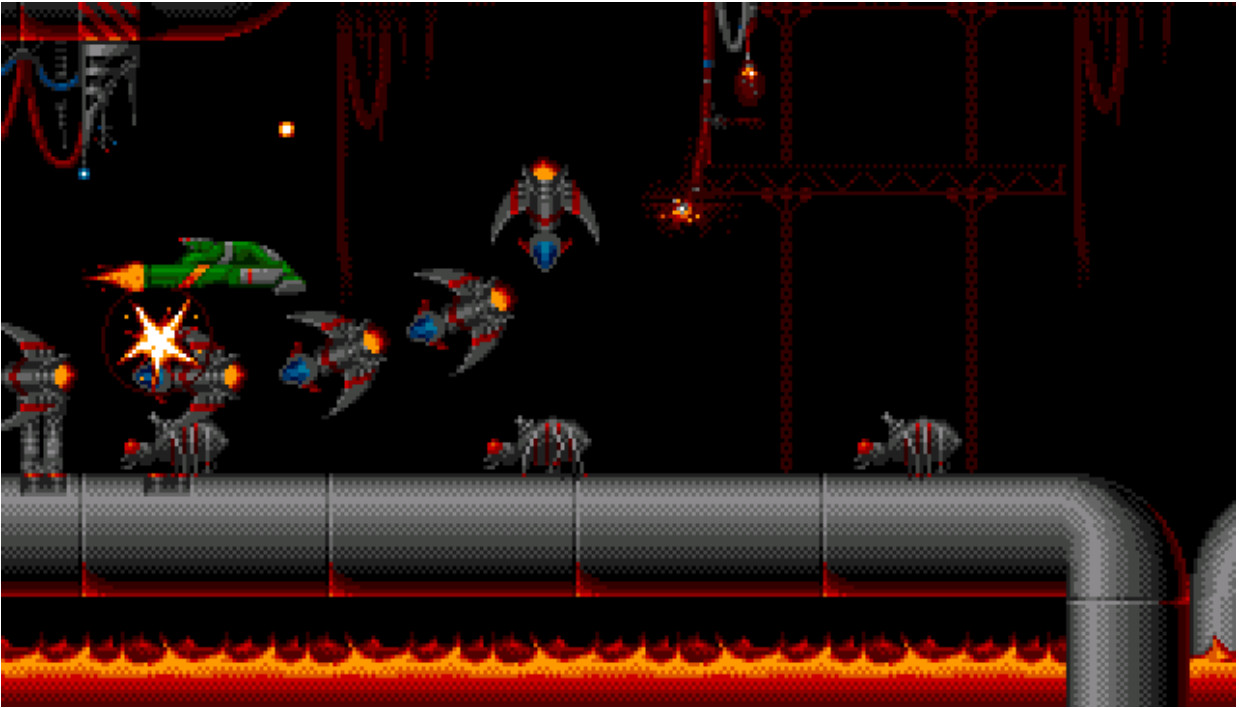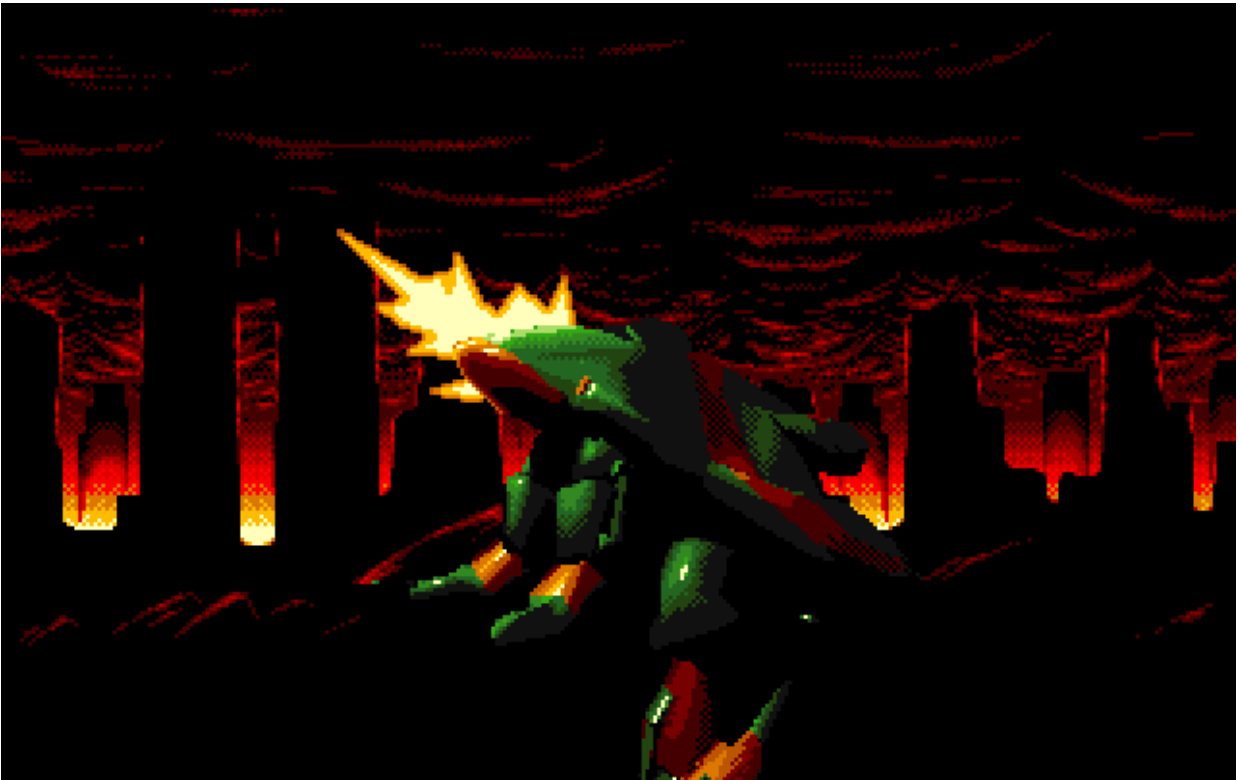
Following an apocalyptic, and highly atmospheric introduction sequence (ironically book-ended by a cheerily waving lethal RoboCop), we're plunged into the murky sewers of New York's underworld.
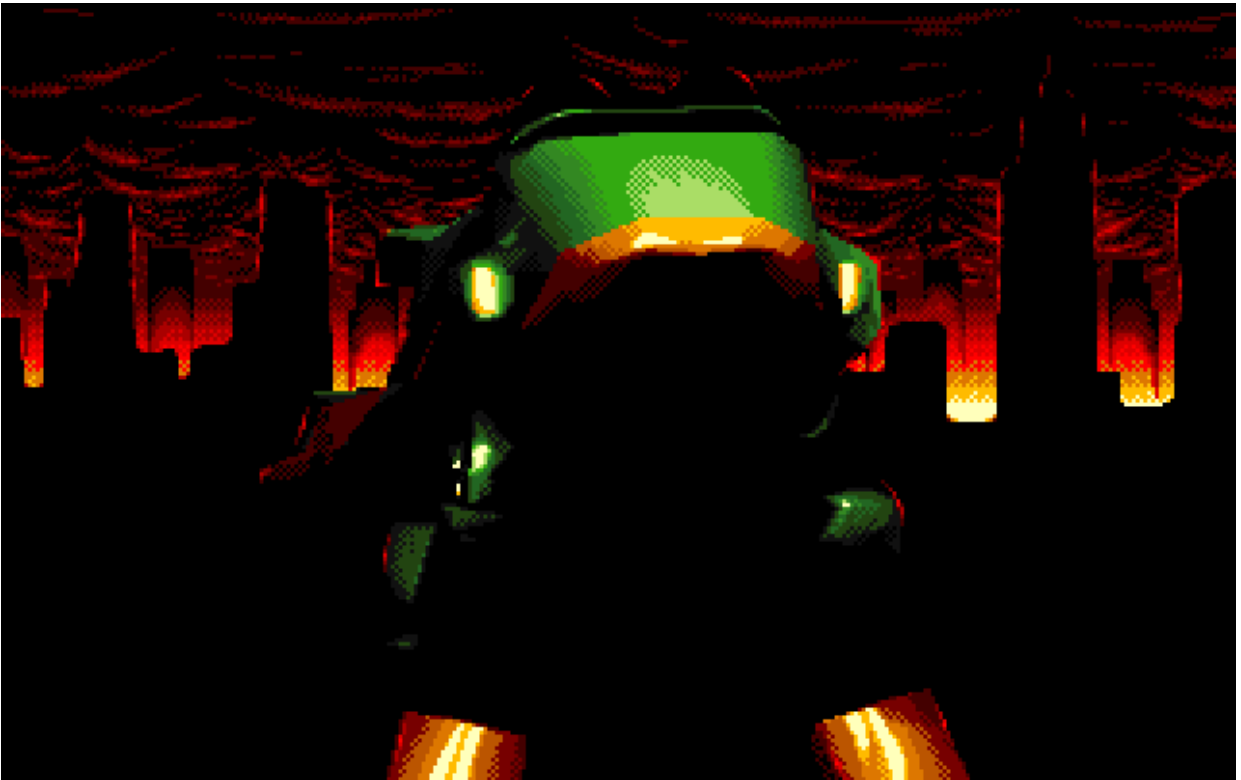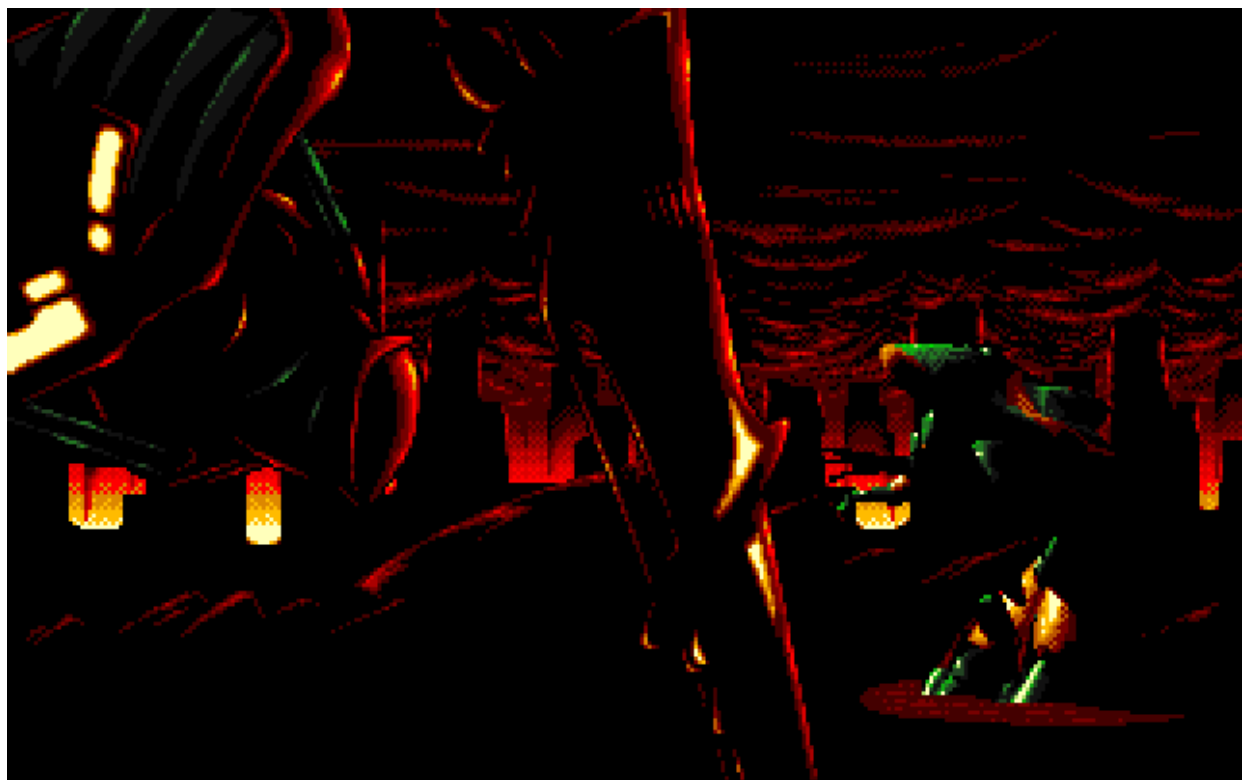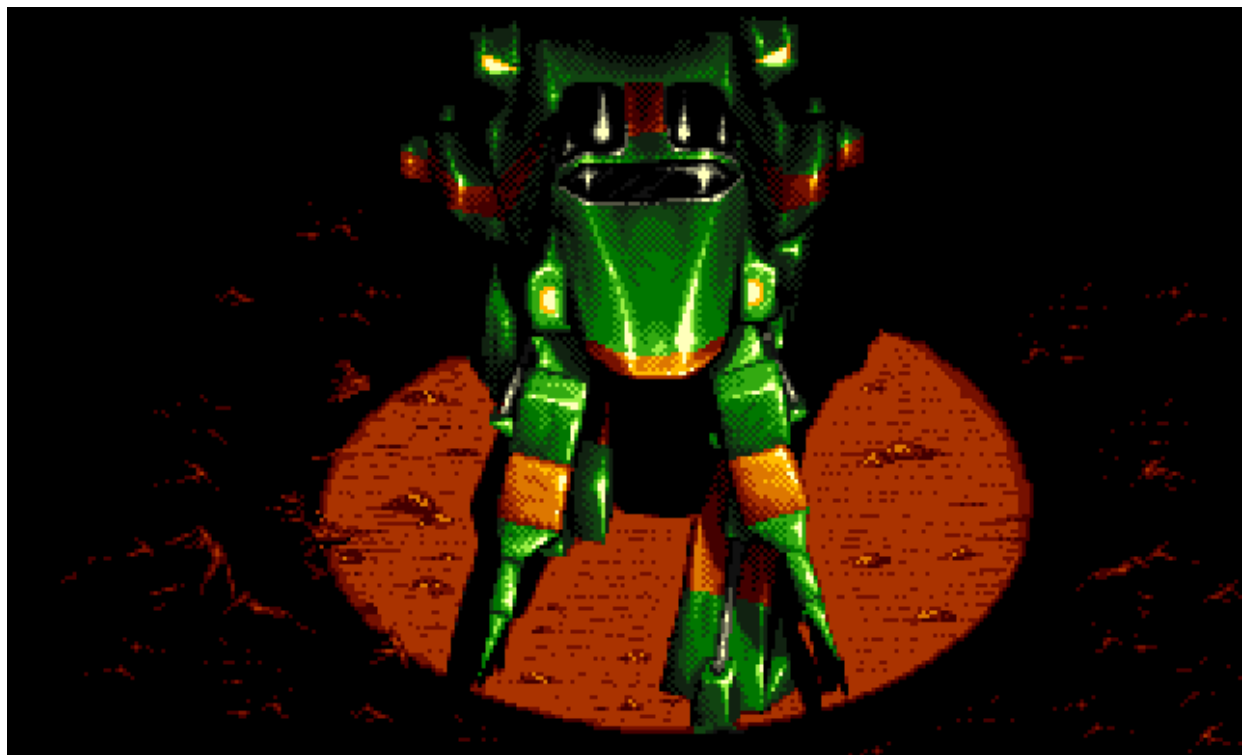
This stage is a typical run and gun affair where slaughtering and maiming are the order of the day. Exploring a labyrinthine series of underground tunnels we encounter

mostly giant, extra-terrestrial insects, while attempting to avoid searing leaky steam valves and fire droplets. Extra energy and weapon upgrades can be collected on route to the exit. Who'd have thought the ransacked, dilapidated streets of downtown New York would look so hospitable.

Sound effects *or* music must be selected from the title screen. You can't experience *both* simultaneously, unfortunately, and once you've made your choice there's no going back without restarting your sci-fi pilgrimage from ground zero. Neither are sufficiently impressive to warrant completing the game twice, though the provocatively upbeat music certainly sets the scene while the limited composition is fresh to your ears.

Level two stipulates a shift in perspective. Twisting through 90 degrees we head *into* the screen, making the transition from horizontally scrolling 2D to 3D. Here the aim is to track down a robotics engineer/scientist known as 'Tank' seeing as he is so critical to the survival of the robot defence league. Maybe he's built like one, who knows? His birth certificate

has been incinerated so I can't check to see if it's just a nickname.

At a glacial pace, we shimmy around abandoned vehicles and rocks while fending off more bugs (and now crabs). They are politely persuaded to perish upon presentation of... grenades. Pickled peppers would have been more fun mind you. We control the elevation of their projection by firing whilst pushing up or down on the joystick as you might with a flight yoke.

Detours are made by turning into roads to the left and right of our ED-209 surrogate, wherein we forge ahead once again at 12 o'clock as before on an almost identical path. A distant city looms on the horizon, never appearing to draw any nearer; an appropriate metaphor for your sense of accomplishment as you plod onward towards the final tryst.

Rocket boosters securely strapped on, we take to the skies for level three. Robozone is now a shoot 'em up! It seems that Arc couldn't decide on a single genre, so settled for *three* instead. The Amiga was never graced with a

Transformers game of any kind, half-baked or otherwise. This is certainly no substitute.
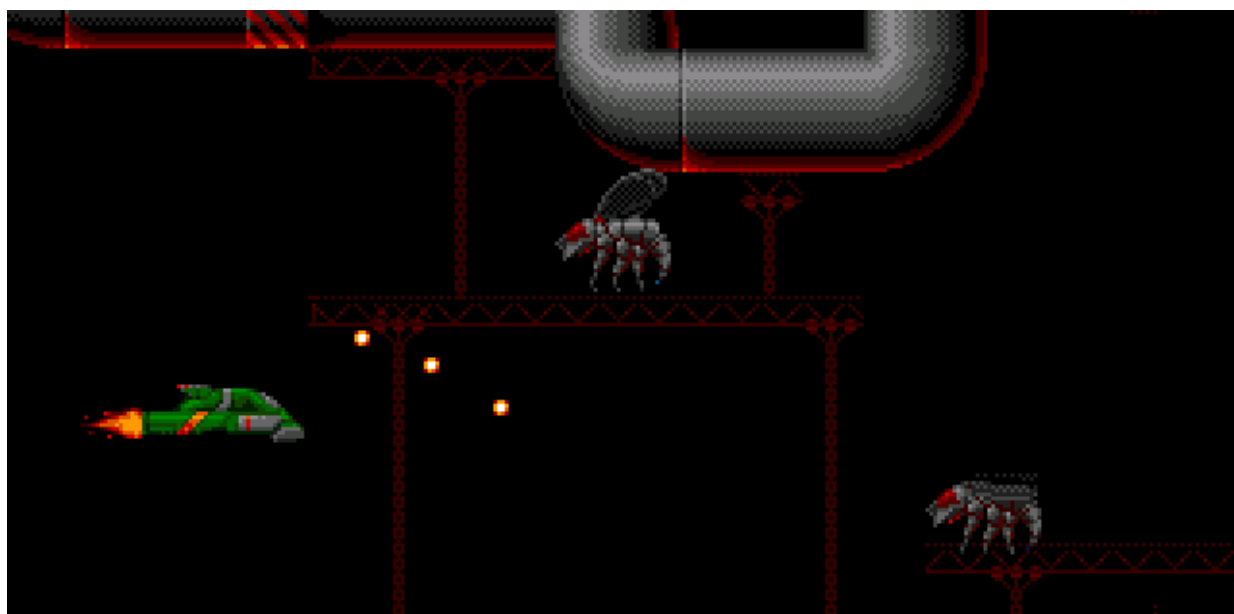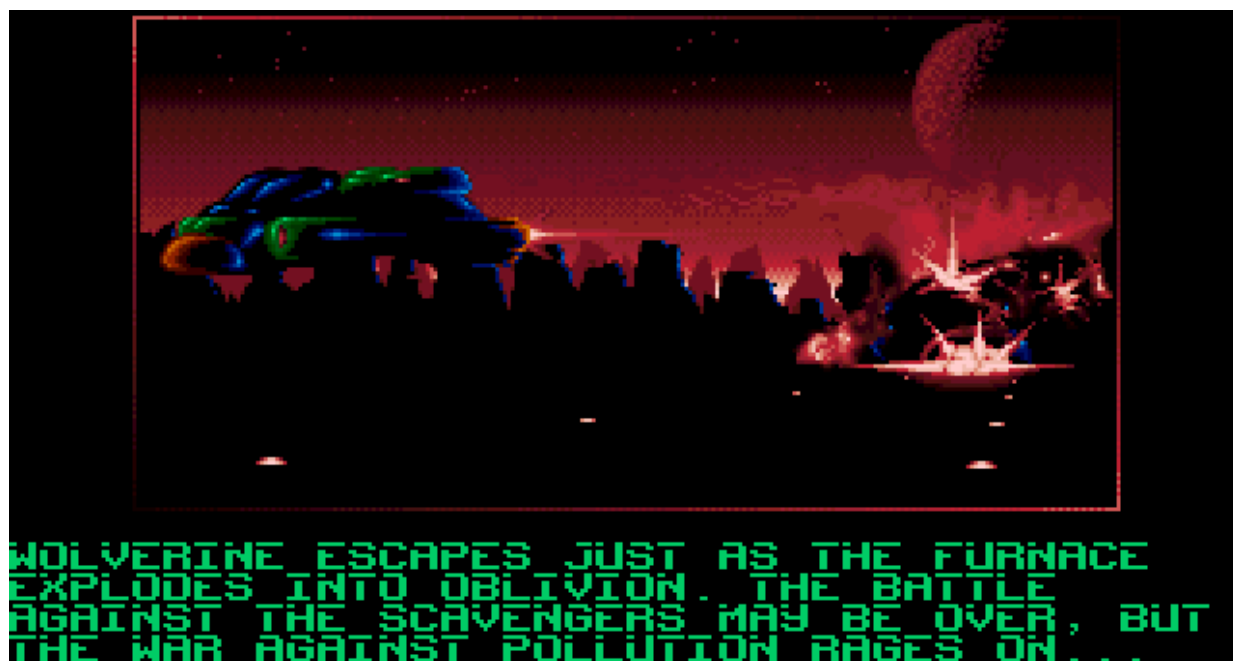

As before, if the pollution-o-metre reaches its limit we run out of time and it's game over. Once more a variety of bugs (chaperoned by space ships this time) are our main hindrance, though as we're now packing plasma cannons I suspect they already know who's boss.

At the terminus of a series of tunnels decorated with lava pits and industrial ducts we meet The Protector. Kind of a minimally animated, legless stormtrooper kitted out with shoulder rockets. Dance around his volleys, blast him in the visor for a bit, and he's history.

Once the hurly-burly's done we're warned that only half the battle has been won. Now we must tackle our fiercest foe of all; pollution, the final caveat.

WOLVERINE ESCAPES JUST AS THE FURNACE
EXPLODES INTO OBLIVION. THE BATTLE
AGAINST THE SCAVENGERS MAY BE OVER, BUT
THE WAR AGAINST POLLUTION RAGES ON...

It turns out that the more significant source was the Furnace, the take-home message presumably being that even if we recycle our waste, and use public transport rather than gas-guzzling Land-rovers, alien insects from space will likely show up to spoil all our hard work, so we may as well not even bother.

...and who said games don't have an important message to convey? Everything is pointless and we're all doomed. So bleak, so true. Hey, on the bright side, we don't have to worry about separating the paper from the plastic any more. Every cloud...